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SUBJECT: PRT Herat: Semi-Annual Herat Province Review

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Herat enjoys a relatively stable security situation, an improvement from this past spring when there was a series of kidnappings. Shindand and Guzara districts remain unsettled. Governor Anwari has worked closely with Coalition forces, the Italian-led PRT, international organizations, and NGOs to improve security, governance, and development. Heratis' major concern is the current drought and the projected poor harvest. The UN has predicted large-scale population displacements in western Afghanistan as people seek out alternate sources of food and water. The PRT provides substantial resources for reconstruction and development.

Security: Stable, But Problems to the South

12. (SBU) The security situation in Herat is generally good, but on-going operations in southern Afghanistan have spill-over effects in Shindand district. Guzara district is a base for local criminal elements. In early spring 2008, there was a spate of kidnappings, which caused the local population to protest the deteriorating security situation. Governor Anwari coordinated an operation with ISAF and Afghan security forces in Guzara against the criminals, and there have been no kidnappings since the operation.

13. (SBU) The economic vitality of Herat and Heratis' interest in maintaining it makes infiltration by anti-government forces more difficult. Recently, five individuals carrying approximately 110 kgs of explosives were arrested shortly after they arrived in the province. The Regional Chief of Police (CoP) and Herat CoP are very active in countering anti-government activity in coordination with their U.S. military and ISAF mentors in Shindand and Farsi districts. There have been no attacks against the PRT or PRT personnel during the last six months, although the PRT does not operate in all of Herat's districts.

Governance: Governor Anwari Still in Place

14. (SBU) The administration of Herat province is reasonably good and the local government officials, with some exceptions, are reasonably competent. As far back as September 2007, there have been rumors that Governor Anwari would be replaced; however, he is still in place and continues to successfully manage the province, work with the international community on development and security, maintain good relations with Iran, and work to counter the disruptive influences of former governor Ismail Khan's agents in Herat. He has been able to gain not only the public support of local religious leaders, but also the support of local former mujahideen who were unhappy about being excluded from the government with Khan's departure to Kabul as Energy Minister. Rumors persist, however, that he will be replaced soon.

Development: Both Quick-Impact and Long-Term

15. (SBU) The Italian contribution to development in Herat is made by the military and civilian components via coordinated though separate programs. The Italian military concentrates on quick-impact projects carried out by its civilian affairs staff, and the yearly budget is about 5 million euros. The civilian component works on longer-term development projects, and its budget comes from Italy's overall development budget for Afghanistan of about 40 million euros, including 10 million euros for Herat. Since the Italians took over the PRT in 2005, they have spent 40 million euros on reconstruction. Iran continues to invest in Herat with construction of the railroad continuing, but with only Iranian engineers and labor. Given the availability of development resources from the international community, provincial officials find it easier to ask for international help rather than raise their concerns with Kabul.

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